

Kolman, Joe

From: Kathryn QannaYahu <kathryn@emwh.org>
Sent: Wednesday, June 03, 2015 8:10 PM
To: Kolman, Joe
Subject: Public Comment for EQC members- FWP Bison position/Arnie Dood

Dear EQC Committee Members,

As a Montana conservation hunter & angler, I am proud of our sportsmens dollars (99.5%) which support our FWP agency, with only .5% (\$309,125), coming out of the State General Fund to carry out a portion of Montana's Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program. I am not proud, however, that as a sportsmen watching bills in the last legislative session, I, and others, missed that our agency was part of a 4% Personal Services Reduction directed by HB2. It is too late to do anything about that now, but we will be keeping an eye out in the future.

Once hearing about these cuts taking place in mid-May, I called Helena FWP to get a list of the affected positions. At the same time, I had also heard that our Native Species Biologist for Bison position, held by Arnie Dood, a 40 year employee (since 1975) with FWP, was one of those cuts. Not hearing back from Helena on what the positions were, I began calling all the regions, speaking with each Supervisor, to find out what positions were cut, if any were already vacant, if vacant for how long, if an employee was transferred to another position, was it a lateral move with their pay intact.

It turns out that our native bison position was the only position with a live person in it that was cut, offering a 40 year public trust servant a demotion and a 2 pay level decrease in pay from a Band 7 to a Band 5. At which point I contacted one of our senators down here in Region 3, Sen. Mike Phillips, and checked with Joe Kolman to see if this subject was on the upcoming agenda.

Arnie has worked with a number of species recovery programs involving the Piping Plover, Grizzly Bear, Wolf, Peregrine Falcon, Bald Eagle, Black Footed Ferret and the Bison. This FWP public servant has worked with hunters, landowners, NGO's and served the sportsmen well. Dood, along with Stephanie Adams, wrote the FWP book - Background Information on Issues of Concern for Montana: Plains Bison Ecology, Management, and Conservation (2011). He has also written and contributed to a number of academic papers during his FWP career. This last summer, as our FWP Region Supervisor Pat Flowers retired, Arnie Dood was one of 3 final applicants for that position. He gave an awesome presentation at the supervisor hiring meeting in Bozeman, speaking to the Public Trust and North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

As the Native Species Biologist for Bison, Arnie was the front man for all the scoping meetings and bore the brunt of all the animosity that the minority of the Montana bison objecting public expressed towards bison restoration. In fact in 2012, the Northern Ag Network wrote of Dood, "Arnie Dood isn't a stranger to highly contentious wildlife issues. He was FWP's point man for the reintroduction of both grizzly bears and gray wolves in Montana." Two other species they were not happy about and Dood's name and face became synonymous with the political issues. It is the wild bison politics which put a target on him recently.

Our Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is a member of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) which has as one of its In WAFWA's Public Trust Doctrine Resolution it mandates, "that fish and wildlife resources are to be held in trust by government for the benefit of present and future generations." Point no. 6 of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation states, "Science is the proper tool for discharge of wildlife policy."

We need qualified scientific wildlife management and dedicated public trust servants in our wildlife agency, Arnie Dood embodies both. Additionally, this Native Species Biologist for Bison position is necessary for the future of the wild bison program in Montana. Please do not approve of the political hit job that is taking place with this crucial position and this dedicated 40 year employee, it would be a disgrace to lose yet another of our great wildlife biologists to special interests politics.

Thank you,
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